Volunteer Policy

Volunteering with **All About Us – ASD Teens**

About us

Our group was set up in September 2018. We currently have 11 volunteers and 6teen leaders who volunteer with us, we are giving the opportunity for young people to develop their skills working with children with disabilities, helping them to choose their career pathways.

Some of our young volunteers are diagnosed with autism or associated conditions themselves.

We also support young people who volunteer for their Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

**Aims and Objectives carried out by All About Us – ASD Teens**

We aim to reduce social isolation, increase self-confidence, skills and help to make new friendships while providing a safe, secure, welcoming and happy environment for children and adults with:-

* Autism Spectrum Disorder
* Learning difficulties
* Asperger’s
* ADHD/ASD/ADD
* Dyslexia
* Other associated conditions

Our aim is to:

Treat every child/adult as an individual and meet additional needs regardless of gender, race, nationality and culture without discriminating in a safe, secure, welcoming and happy environment.

Providing quality sensory experiences for all.

(Care Act 2014 which received Royal Assent on 14 May 2014.

* To recognise the value of parents input and encourage them to share in their child/adult learning
* To treat every child/adult as an individual recognising additional needs, gender, race, nationality and culture.
* To support equal opportunities.
* To bring together families, carers, schools and organisations involved in the disabled community.

Our objectives are:

To use a variety of materials, sensory, stimulating and of interest to our young people, to do this through play, arts and crafts, training sessions, therapies, to make the best possible use of time, space and all equipment available. It is important that the environment presents the child/adult with an attractive, challenging, stimulating and safe environment.

* To encourage equal opportunities for all.
* To learn in a sensory room where there is no failure
* To recognise the value of parents input and encourage them to share in their child/adult learning.
* To promote positive behaviour by praising, encouraging and being attentive to all needs.
* To continually assess the guidance available from all sources, particularly government departments and have **best practice** in all areas.
* To value all volunteers highly and ensure that every opportunity is given to each volunteer member to develop their personal skills and to broaden their knowledge and skills in caring for and educating your children.
* All volunteers over 18 require AccessNI criminal record checks
* All volunteers must have regard for the Code of Practice for children and adults with special educational needs. **Particularly, the Children Act 2004 and the Green Paper "Every Child Matters" 2003. The purpose of these papers is to ensure that all children, despite their background or circumstance, are given the opportunity to flourish.**

**Last updated July 2021**

Purpose of our volunteer policy

Our volunteer policy has been created to show our volunteers and potential volunteers that we have spent time and care in planning how volunteers will be welcomed at All About Us – Asd Teens. It also outlines that all volunteers will be treated in a fair and consistent way. It should also help our volunteers understand what support is available to them and what they can expect from us.

Our vision and mission for volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas whilst having fun and meeting like-minded people. By volunteering for All About US – Asd Teens you will

be making a positive contribution to community development in our area. Volunteers are vital to our work.

Attracting volunteers and volunteer agreement

We have a range of opportunities for volunteers to get involved in.

We support the opportunity to young people to volunteer for their Duke of Edinburgh alongside our group.

All you need to do then is to complete our very short Volunteer Registration Form. Alternatively, you can come along in person and enquire about becoming a volunteer.”

Once we receive a copy of your completed registration form, a member of our team will get in touch with more information on specific opportunities and we can decide together which option best matches your interests and time availability and also our needs. Your help will be greatly appreciated and really will make a difference.

AccessNI Checks

Some volunteer roles will require an Access Ni check to inform All About Us – Asd Teens of any criminal convictions that a person wishing to volunteer may have. For example, any volunteer position which involves regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to an Access Ni check.

Induction and training

It does not matter how much you already know, as there will be opportunities to learn, and we have roles to suit every level of expertise.

There will be an induction prepared and delivered by one of our staff. This will include:

* Some information about All About Us – Asd Teens,our vision, mission and our future plans;
* the role of the volunteer;
* introduction to some volunteers;
* tour around our facilities and see some of our initiatives;
* copy of all the relevant policies including this volunteer policy and also our child protection policy and our constitution.
* essential procedures such as a timekeeping rota

information about training and ongoing learning opportunities

There will be a trial period of four weeks to give All About Us – Asd Teens and you time to discover if you are suited to each other. A review will be made midway through the trial period and also at the end. This is not an assessment, it is just so that we can be sure that you benefit the most from the volunteering experience and maximize the time you are giving freely.

Support

Our Volunteer Co-coordinator Olivia Davidson will offer support to you. He will remain your key contact throughout your volunteering with us. This will include regular meetings with you to discuss how you are getting on, discuss any training needs and deal with issues arising. This will also ensure that All About Us – Asd Teens are doing all we can to make your volunteering experience an enjoyable and meaningful one.

Recognition and reward

We could not do the work we do without our volunteers. To acknowledge this we will always say thank you and show appreciation for a job well done. There will always be a listening ear or shoulder to lean on.

We will hold social events each year to celebrate your achievements; where we hold a certificate presentation for volunteers. During these events you will get an opportunity to meet other volunteers and supporters of our work and share in our plans for the future.

We will take opportunities in our website and Facebook page, annual general meetings, and local and national press to praise the achievements of our volunteers.

Each year we will hold a volunteers week where volunteers will get the opportunity to come along to presentations.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All reasonable out of pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed including expenses for travel and meals (if working more than 4.5 hours in one session). In order to claim expenses, an Expenses Form must be completed, a valid receipt provided and this should be handed in at the finance office/to the volunteer Co-ordinator Olivia Davidson.

Insurance, health and safety, accidents and risk assessment

**All About Us – Asd Teens** has a valid insurance policy so that volunteers are covered by public liability insurance, which you are advised to read. It covers the volunteering activities you will be doing. We will keep reminding you of our Health and Safety and child protection procedures and give simple instructions on how to perform each task safely. We have clear procedures for accidents and emergencies and will always have a first aider on site.

Resolving problems

We hope that you will have a very enjoyable experience volunteering with us. However if your role as a volunteer does not meet with your expectations or with the commitments we have made to you, we want you to feel comfortable about letting us know. First of all, talk to the person who leads the team where you volunteer and he or she should be able to sort it out with you before it becomes a problem. If you do not feel this will resolve things you can speak to the Volunteer Co-ordinator Olivia Davidson.

Confidentiality

We expect all volunteers to adhere to confidentiality guidelines which will be explained to you before you begin volunteering with us and this also includes use of social media and contact with any press.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

All About Us – Asd Teens is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality and inclusion. When representing our group as a volunteer we expect you to support our commitment to promoting equality.

Volunteering whilst on benefit

You can still volunteer with us if you are receiving benefits provided that we follow the legal guidelines. We have information from the Jobs and Benefits Department which we can talk through with you regarding the hours you can do and what you can claim for expenses incurred through volunteering.

This is the Volunteer Policy of All About Us – Asd Teens

It will be reviewed every: - May

Date of next review: - May 2025

Signed: - Olivia Davidson

Position: - Volunteer Co-ordinator

Signed: - Christina O’Neill

Position CEO/family support

Reviewed:

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| August 2021 | Committee |
| March 2023 | Committee |
| August 2024 | committee |
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